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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6030  
INFO RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7090  
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY 7570  
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC 2611

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [ETRD](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE: NICARAGUA ELECTIONS;  
SAO PAULO

#### 1. "Tunnel Of Time"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo editorialized (11/8): "Daniel Ortega was elected Nicaragua's president 16 years after having left the government. The Sandinista Front leader says he has changed, disowns his Marxist past and declares himself a pragmatic politician.... However, the White House did not believe in Ortega's 'conversion' and openly campaigned for Eduardo Montealegre, the liberal-conservative candidate. U.S. Ambassador in Nicaragua Paul Trivelli acted like a member of the campaign staff, and Florida's Governor Jeb Bush sent a letter to a Nicaraguan daily, warning against the consequences of a Sandinista return. Even characters thought to be relegated to Cold War's history books, such as Oliver North, reemerged and visited Managua to campaign against Ortega.... It is not only the past that sharpens the US suspicion vis-à-vis the Sandinistas. Currently, the links between Ortega and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez are a reason for Washington's concern. In fact, the US was not the only one to openly intervene in the Nicaraguan elections. Chavez supplied subsidized gasoline to Sandinista politicians. The fact is that Ortega won the presidential dispute in a democratic election that was monitored by international observers. It is expected that the US, which for decades has been trying to convince the world about the importance of democracy, knows how to respect the election returns and give Ortega a chance to govern."

#### 2. "Ortega Returns To Power"

An editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo commented (11/8): "Former dictator Daniel Ortega was elected president of Nicaragua in an election that observers from the OAS, the EU and the Carter Center considered clean. After three frustrated attempts to return to power, Ortega learned with Colonel Hugo Chavez how to mount an election without raising suspicions.... [But] Ortega carefully avoided any public association with Chavez so that the mistakes committed by the Bolivarian leader in Mexico, Peru and Ecuador were not repeated.... Last, but not the least, Ortega learned from Chavez that elections must be won even before the first ballot is deposited. And that everything is valid for that purpose.... But Ortega's victory is not only due to the cleverness learned from Chavez to mold laws and institutions according to his interests. The front runner candidate - who would have certainly won the elections - former Managua's Mayor Herty Lewites, died in July.... In addition, the US Ambassador's interference - who tried to unify the opposition parties - had on voters the same effect that Chavez's support produced in Mexico, Peru and Ecuador: led them to vote in

Ortega.... Daniel Ortega won the elections with a large margin. And  
now, Colonel Hugo Chavez leads the Caracas-Havana-La Paz-Managua  
axis." McMullen